

# Saturday Evening Post

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## LET ME REST.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,  
BY EMM E. HILFORD.

I am weary; let me rest  
Underneath the falling dew,  
With the grass open to my breast,  
And the stars to look upon.  
O, the thought is strangely sweet,  
Just and pure, secure from care,  
And the thought of my bed,  
That I might be in to-morrow.

I am weary; let me sleep  
With my hands upon my breast;  
But I pray you let me sleep  
In your arms, dear little child,  
I have loved you ever since  
Sweet the thought of you have given,  
And the stars and moonlight  
Half as full, half as bright.

I am weary and would rest  
As a child in mother's arms,  
For in her arms I have found  
Peace, in her arms I have found  
The love, the grace, the joy,  
The love, the grace, the joy,  
For the rest that I shall find  
On her gentle breast only.

## AGNES AYRE.

A Tale of the Times of Marion and Sambo.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,  
BY BURR THORNBURY.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### THE PRISONER.

Colonel Marchester, dangerously wounded, was in the hands of the enemy. He had given his name, but not his rank, to his captors. A portion of the force against which Marion's attack had been directed, had escorted Captain Gordon to within a short distance of his house, and belonged to his regiment. Clifford Ayre and his party had not fallen in with the pursuing dragoons, but the next morning they learned that a skirmish had occurred, and that several prisoners had been taken. Herbert saw them, learned their names, and was surprised to find that of Walter Marchester among them. A regiment whose Colonel bore that name had surrounded at Charleston, but the commander himself was not one of the number. Could it be possible that this man, taken in a petty assault on a temporary out-post, was the absent Colonel? He looked it to command a regiment—or an army.

Clifford Ayre had come storming back from his fruitless search for his daughter. Preparations for a more extended search were being made. The county was to be secured in every direction.

"She has gone to some of her rebel friends," said the sergeant. "Are they to be trusted? And to think that Ayre is in such affinity with them—the rebellious faction!"

Mrs. Gordon was shocked to think that her niece should seek the protection of a camp. It was terrible; but she bore the trial with her usual high-bred equanimity.

Her son, as we have seen, had gone to the post where the prisoners were confined. He had obtained a signed of his troopers to assist in the search, and to shoot a few whiffs if they should happen to meet them. He turned, he mentioned incidentally the name of the chief prisoner and the circumstances of his capture.

"Walter Marchester!" exclaimed Clifford Ayre, a demoniac smile showing on his features. Fate is never unkind. Walter Marchester! a Colonel absent from his command. Good! He shall die—he shall die the death of a spy.

Surprised at his uncle's vehemence, the Captain inquired its cause.

"Walter Marchester is my personal enemy, boy; my enemy and yours. That is sufficient. He shall die."

The nephew saw nothing to object to in this last proposition; the fewer rebels the better; but he was curious to know why his uncle should be so bitter against this man of whom he had never heard, till chance had made him acquainted with his name.

"I am sure I am concerned for her ladyship, uncle," returned the Captain, slightly cut by the sneer in the words. "She may fall in love with some rebel officer—and then what would my chance be. She likes me little enough now."

The two separated, the older going directly to the British camp. His enemy should not escape him this time; he would make sure of that. He did not see the prisoner—he did not wish to see him; but he learned of his condition, and was informed that every precaution would be taken to guard against rescue. There was no danger of his attempting to escape—it was yet doubtful if he would survive his wound.

But he lived and grew better, and in a few days was removed to Georgetown. And then, at Clifford Ayre's instigation, steps were taken, upon his sufficient recovery, to have him tried and hung as a spy.

The matter was already enough. Hale and Ayre and other rebels without had suffered in that way. Captured, without his uniform, outside of the city in which was his regiment, for what could he hope?

Two weeks later Marchester was notified of what would be his probable fate. His wound had now ceased to give him pain, and was rapidly healing. Strength was returning to his limbs, and if he had been free he would have commenced himself ready for further service. He was willing to die for



COLONEL MARCHESTER IS AGAIN TAKEN PRISONER.

his country; the ignominious death of a spy if need be; but he resolved not to suffer thus unjustly if he could escape. His services in the good, but almost despairing cause, would now be more valuable than ever. The natural love of life also asserted itself, though with him the ties that bound to existence were fewer than with many. But he would gain his freedom if possible, and he began to plan an escape. He was closely guarded, but not bound; his supposed weakness from his wound exempting him from that. He saw the advantage that deception in this respect, now that he was growing stronger, might give him, and he feigned continued debility.

Colonel Marchester was a man of superior resources in a lengthened trial or in an emergency. He saw the way to end a difficulty or a dilemma quickly and clearly if there was a way, and no one was swifter or surer in the execution of his plans. More than once in the army had his coolness and coolness averted disaster, and turned discouragement to success. But in his present position he saw little opportunity to act. His surveillance was unrelenting; he was guarded as if he had been Greene or Washington himself. There was, no doubt, a personal agency in this—Clifford Ayre had pointed this evening's vigilance.

The prisoner was sure that the British line at Georgetown was not guarded with half the care that his own prison door was watched. Once past the sentinels that paced near, he felt that he could count on escape from his more numerous but less vigilant enemies in the camp. There was a lull in the activity of the partisan generals in the vicinity. The British began to think that in common with many others they had given up the struggle, and their vigilance in guarding against surprise was accordingly somewhat relaxed.

But only the most daring movement could save Colonel Marchester, and he prepared himself to make it. One evening the commandant of the place—Colonel Watson, we believe, at that time—came to visit him, accompanied by an Adjutant.

"It is my duty to inform you," said the officer, "that your trial will come off to-morrow, and that an unfavorable verdict will be followed by an immediate execution of your sentence. Such are my orders and I must obey, though I regret exceedingly that one gifted with such a goodly frame of manhood as you should suffer in such a way."

"I thank you for your sympathy," said the prisoner. "But since it is necessary, I can offer death without murmuring, though I am innocent of the offence for which I will be arraigned."

Marchester had arisen as he spoke, his gait being unsteady in the room. His eyes were fixed calmly upon the officer. No tremor was in his voice, no agitation in his frame; yet in that moment he had conceived a desperate plan of escape. As he ceased speaking, he glanced at the Colonel's sword, which hung at his side. He snatched it from its scabbard, and before the astonished adjutant, who supposed the prisoner was still weak from his wound, had recovered themselves, he sprang past them, dealt a terrific blow upon the head of the first sentinel he met, served the next in a similar way, turned the corner of the strong log building in which he had been confined, and before the adjutant was fairly alarmed had passed the loose line of pickets, and was away once more to liberty.

"Ye gods! what strength for a wounded man!" cried the Colonel, who more surprised by the celerity of the movement than he had been before in his life, had rushed out in time to witness the disappearance of the second sentinel.

"Across the camp!" he shouted.

Guns were fired, rockets were blazing up into the air, and instantly the whole camp was in commotion. Sabres clattered, officers

swore and shouted, and squad of dragoons were seen thundering in the direction taken by the escaped prisoner.

It was now dark. Welcome were the gathering shadows to the fugitive. They enabled him to evade his numerous pursuers, the tramp of whose horses' feet was often heard near him. Had it been day, no earthly chance of escape would have been his. He did not attempt immediate flight from the spot he had now reached, but lay concealed in a thicket till the order of pursuit had abated. Toward midnight he heard some of the returning troopers pass near him, giving expression to their disappointment at not having apprehended him. He crouched low in the bushes, and when another hour had passed, arose and struck out boldly for the forest. He could not hope to reach that stream by morning, and he knew that by day new dangers would beset him, yet he felt strong and hopeful, thanked Heaven for his escape, and went rejoicing on his way.

When morning came, he secreted himself as best he could, for the country was generally open, and afforded little opportunity for unobserved progress. His place of concealment was near an unfrequented road. A low growth of bushes bordered it for some distance, and a clump of trees stood near the center of the wide and straggling hedge.

At the foot of these a spring bubbled up, and it was to slake his thirst that the fugitive had approached the spot. No other refreshment could be obtained, and he felt the need of this. The region around was lonely, and here he resolved to pass the day. The long hours wore on; the setting sun threw its level beams across the land, and a sultry stillness succeeded the glare of the afternoon.

Marchester was about to resume his flight, when he thought he heard the sound of approaching footsteps. He listened; a body of men were certainly coming down the road. Were they friends or enemies? He looked on. In the twilight he saw a troop of British dragoons and some infantry, nearly a hundred men in all, having in their charge a much larger number of Americans. He sunk down in his covert. As the soldiers and their prisoners approached the spot, a halt was ordered. Great God! if he should be discovered. The British refreshed themselves at the spring, but gave the poor fellows they were taking to imprisonment never a drop, though they were evidently suffering with thirst.

Very still the Colonel lay in his place of concealment. The soldiers had refreshed themselves, but they seemed in no hurry to move on. Some seated themselves by the roadside; some entered the camp. A cry of commotion—a clash of steel—a struggle—and Marchester was again a prisoner! He was placed in the ranks of the others, the word of command was given, and the night march was taken up for Charleston.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### LEAVING CAMP—THE STORM.

Agnes Ayre and her female friends passed several days in the swamp. They were safe, for the time at least; they were with honorable men; but their situation was scarcely in a degree unpleasant. Their accommodations were rude, and unsuited for one who, like Agnes, had been accustomed to a luxurious home. She would have continued to endure all this without one thought of complaint; like other heroic women of the times, she would gladly have made any sacrifice, suffered any discomfort, if the country demanded it. But the hardships of the prison were increasing, and might at length become too great for even men to endure. Almost chattering, with the earth often for their food, and accords and wild music for their food, it was thought that before the expiration of the patriots' term of service, the young lady and her com-

pansions should remove to a place of greater safety. In the northwestern part of the state, near the confines of North and South Carolina, dwelt a sister of Mrs. Whipple, ple, and to her it was decided to go. There they would await the result of events, hoping that, though the prospect was discouraging, before many months passed would return.

Accordingly, accompanied by Hipson, and escorted by a number of Marion's men till they were beyond probable danger of interruption by unfriendly persons, Agnes and stout-hearted Mrs. Whipple and her daughter left the camp.

"How much you take care of yourself, and of Miss Agnes too,—though I'm thinking she's no child,—and in a few months I may join you. There's no telling in these times, were the parting words of Mark."

His little wife looked very serious, as well she might, at the prospect of the long separation, and putting her fresh lips to her husband's, the farewell kiss was taken. And Agnes had her adieu to make—kind ones to the brave men who had given her their protection, and a tender one, a very tender one, to Major Henry Adley, for she parted from him as his promised bride. A low growth of bushes bordered it for some distance, and a clump of trees stood near the center of the wide and straggling hedge.

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The afternoon was intensely hot, as indeed the morning had been, and there was every indication of an approaching storm. That heated and thunder-charged atmosphere would never clear without a strife of the elements. The travellers looked with apprehension at the sky which had already begun to lower, and the mulatto expressed his belief that they were to experience a storm of unusual severity.

"We had better look out for a stopping-place, Miss Agnes," he said. "I don't like the signs—there's clouds in blue-black, and they mean mischief. Don't you notice how they go hurrying about as if making it all up among themselves to do their worst?"

"That is just how they look, Hipson," returned Agnes anxiously, struck with the force of his quaint description. "They have a very unusual appearance, and the thunder is already ominous."

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Whipple as off to the northeast a flash of lightning split the dark gathered mass of clouds. A single majestic boom followed, after an interval, and then a distant, dying roll. The air had grown very still, its uneasy sighing that had for some time been heard, quite subsiding. But it was hotter than before, though the sun was obscured; the space between earth and cloud was like a vast heated chamber.

"Where shall we go?" asked the alarmed ladies of Hipson, who was evidently perplexed where to turn. No place of refuge

seemed to offer. They were on an open upland, though further on a strip of pine forest spread.

"We must take to the wood," he answered. "See! the storm is coming!" A fringe of cloud, light as a roll of wool, came blowing up the front of the tempest, leaving the darker masses—the heavier artillery—behind. This foam-like portion, driven by a furious wind soon passed over their heads; the wind raged for a brief time; and then all was silent again. But the darker, slower-driven cloud was approaching, and as it came up a second frowning mass drove toward it from another quarter. They met like two armies of the skies. The storm was awful. Flash after flash of intense flame, peal after peal of terrific thunder—not long and rolling, but in single bursts like the near explosion of artillery.

Our friends had reached the wood; it was dangerous to enter because of the lightning, but more dangerous to remain upon the exposed upland. The horse of Agnes reared and plunged; he was usually easy to be mastered, but now his fright rendered him uncontrollable. Hipson endeavored to assist his young mistress; he grasped her bridle rein, but his own animal was now ungovernable, and he was forced to let go his hold. Agnes was brave, and she did her best to restrain the frantic beast, but he turned toward the opening they had just crossed, and bore her away in the rain and darkness.

"She will be killed," cried poor Hipson in agony. "Oh! my dear young mistress!" Mrs. Whipple and her daughter, who had dismounted and tied their horses, were terrified almost into unconsciousness; indeed they were before so frightened that they did not comprehend this last occurrence, though the explanation of the mulatto thrilled them with a new terror.

It was not yet sunset, but the gloom of the storm shadowed the earth like night. Not yet losing her presence of mind, our heroine maintained her seat in the saddle. Down the rough road they had just ascended flew the frightened animal, even yet in a measure guided by his rider. But the main path was at last lost, and a byway leading up the mountain entered. The fury of the storm was abating and it grew lighter. Agnes, astonished at her own intrepidity and surprised that she had not been thrown or injured, took fresh courage and began to regain control of her steed. The rain and thunder ceased and a momentary glow of sunset was about her. Her voice could be heard as she endeavored to soothe and reassure her horse. He paused, trembling, but tractable. Strangely and sweetly in the wilderness were the tones of that brave girl. "Courage, horse," she said. "It has been terrible, but I am with you."

Did the poor brute understand her. A pitiful neigh was his answer. The transient light of sunset departed. The thunder was muttering again, proclaiming another storm. Where was she? Whither should she turn? What was Hipson and the others? Despair was setting upon her strong soul at last, when an exclamation of surprise—of infinite wonder—caused her to start and look up. A strange, hunter-looking man had just emerged from the forest to the by-path. He carried a rifle, and the manner in which he held it, the attitude into which surprise had struck him, the expression of his features, formed a representation of the most picturesque amusement.

CHAPTER X.  
SAFE, THE RANGER.

"Wall, I never. Ghost or human?" These words came at length from the man who had been so startled at the beautiful forest apparition. Agnes would have been glad to meet almost any human being then, but the sight of the person before her gave

her unusual joy. There was nothing evil in his appearance, on the contrary, his rough features were kindly and smiling in their expression.

"I am lost in the forest," said Agnes. "Wall, I never, I should think you were, quite the man."

"My horse ran with me, frightened by the lightning. Could you assist me to dismount for the night?"

"Come with me to my camp, get there another storm a coming." He took her hand and led her horse further up the mountain. He did not speak, but went on as if he were a mute. He was a man of a certain age, with a weathered face, and a pair of eyes that seemed to look straight into your soul. He was dressed in a simple, practical manner, and he carried a rifle.

Going a short distance to the west, the man turned abruptly to the left, and came to a small clearing, or what seemed a rude cabin, and a small fire was burning. The man stepped forward, and, without a word, he placed the girl's hand upon the fire, and then he turned and looked at her. "You are a brave girl," he said. "I have seen you in the forest, and I have seen you in the camp. You are a brave girl, and I am proud to know you."

"I am Agnes Ayre," she said. "I am a brave girl, and I am proud to know you."

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## CHAPTER 1.



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